

**Statement of
The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Hearing on
“Reauthorization the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing
Arts”
September 27, 2007**

I am very pleased to welcome President Kaiser to today's hearing on the reauthorization of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

This Committee has a strong working relationship with the Kennedy Center, and I am pleased not only to be a great supporter of this fine institution, but also a member of the Board of Trustees. In this capacity, I know first hand of Mr. Kaiser's fine work and dedication. The Kennedy Center, which was established by an act of Congress in 1964 as a living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, is one of the world's preeminent cultural centers. The Kennedy Center is an impressive landmark in the Nation's capital. The building contains approximately 1.5 million square feet of space, and houses nine theaters; three restaurants; and office, meeting, and rehearsal space.

The Kennedy Center is more than a physical memorial. It also acts as a living Presidential memorial for performance arts programming and education. The Kennedy Center reaches more than two million people each year through 2,000 arts performances in Washington, D.C. and through television, radio, and Internet broadcasts. The Center's activities reach beyond the District of Columbia and to all 50 states. The Center provides educational programs for teachers and students from pre-Kindergarten through college across the United States.

In 1994, Congress enacted legislation providing a five-year authorization of appropriations for repairs, maintenance, and capital improvements for the Kennedy Center (P.L. 103-279). Since that time, the Committee has considered, and Congress has passed, four additional bills to authorize operations, maintenance, and capital improvements for the Kennedy Center. Many modifications and enhancements have been made to both the interior and exterior of the building, as well as the grounds of the Center in the past 12 years.

However, as President Kaiser will outline in his testimony, more work is needed to maintain and upgrade this memorial. The Committee will consider these needs as we move legislation to reauthorize Federal funding for the Kennedy Center, to ensure that this institution continues to provide a great cultural service to our Nation.

I look forward to President Kaiser's testimony this morning.

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